



FEMA

Region III Report



Response Operations Branch personnel gathered at the FEB Awards ceremony in Philadelphia on May 6 to receive their silver medal.



Response Branch Chief Dave Parks accepts the FEB award on behalf of the Response Operations Branch for their efforts during Hurricane Isabel.

Response Branch wins silver medal

The Philadelphia Federal Executive Board (FEB) held its annual Excellence in Government Awards ceremony on May 6, highlighting the accomplishments of federal employees in the Philadelphia area. The FEB recognizes outstanding work in developing innovative business practices through the use of technology, cost-cutting measures and customer service. The FEMA Region III Response Operations Branch received a silver medal for the most “Improved Federal Image.” Dave Parks, Response Operations Branch Chief, accepted the group award on behalf of the nine-member team.

“We persevered through a challenging year thanks to teamwork and a consolidated effort under the Department of Homeland Security,” said Parks. “And we continue to grow and become more dynamic.”

During 2003, Region III Response Operations supported 19 major incidents including the President’s Day blizzard and Hurricane Isabel. FEMA provided more than \$600 million in federal assistance to the impacted states and the District of Columbia to assist with the response and recovery efforts.

The FEB has recognized the Region III Response and Recovery Division for two consecutive years. Last year, the Recovery Branch won the silver in the same category for their work after the September 11 attack on the Pentagon.

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Dave Parks, Response Operations Branch Chief

RISC meeting highlights response initiatives

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's federal and state partners gathered on May 11-12 for Region III's semiannual Regional Inter-Agency Steering Committee (RISC) meeting. Held at the Region's new Continuity of Operations location in Northeast Philadelphia, the Response and Recovery Division gave attendees an update on current initiatives for response operations.

With a varied discussion on regional priorities, the meeting focused essentially on educating the Emergency Support Function (ESF) representatives and state emergency managers on the evolving national and regional response operations plans.

Briefing topics ranged from the National Response

Plan and the Determined Promise 2004 exercise in August to the National Disaster Medical System and this season's hurricane forecast. During the meeting, Region III staff demonstrated the new Digital Action Request Tracking (DART) system. The system will enhance the processing of action request forms -- documents used to identify and prioritize state resource needs and requests for federal assistance. "DART is just one of several ways we



Captain Jamie Kirby, U.S. Northern Command Joint Task Force - Civil Support, speaks about response assets during the May 11 RISC meeting.

are working to improve our response capabilities," said Response and Recovery Division Director Tom Majusiak. "As we implement this system and others, we will focus on keeping our ESF's and state partners abreast of how our new plans affect them as members of the Regional Support Team."

In the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel, regional managers are paying close attention to lessons learned from the storm. They are working to address challenges involving the delivery of commodities from the mobilization centers to the states and improving the processing of action request forms.

See RISC Meeting page 4

News from our state partners



Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Director John Droneburg meets with Acting Regional Director Pat Arcuri during his visit to the regional office. The April 27 visit consisted of program briefings and discussions on how Region III can enhance its support to MEMA. Droneburg, who served as the public safety director of Frederick County for 11 years, was appointed to his new position last December.

Va. Planning Commission wins Witt Award

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) received the James Lee Witt Local Award for Excellence from the Association of State Floodplain Managers on May 20. The award is in recognition of the Shenandoah Valley Project Impact-Flood mitigation project. The Witt Award, named for a former director of FEMA, honors outstanding programs and activities at the front lines of floodplain management. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation floodplain management staff made the nomination. The PDC sponsored almost 100 mitigation projects in eight localities to keep people and their homes safer in potential flood situations.

Pa. to hold 2005 REP conference

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) will host the 156th annual National Radiological Emergency Preparedness Conference in April 2005. Attendees will include professionals in emergency management, radiological health, nuclear utilities operations or other organizations involved with radiological emergency preparedness or response. PEMA's point of contact is Eldon Beachley at 717-651-2123.

In Brief...

► **Region III prepares for DP'04**

Under the leadership of its National Preparedness Division, Region III is gearing up for Determined Promise 2004, which is slated to take place August 2-13. Since last fall, regional staff has been attending meetings with Department of Defense (DoD) personnel to discuss their plans for the multi-state, mass-casualty exercise. DP'04 will test the readiness capabilities of several agencies within the DoD and Department of Homeland Security. Region III is working with the Commonwealth of Virginia in preparing for the simulation of several chemical attacks in the Richmond and Hampton Roads areas.

► **Public Assistance reaches out to applicants**

The Region III Public Assistance team launched a major outreach program to help the Commonwealth of Virginia deal with the enormous load of projects generated by Hurricane Isabel. Region III's Mark Beto led the operation, in cooperation with Virginia Public Assistance Officer Bob Anderson. The effort was kicked off the week of May 17 with public meetings with local officials in Hampton and Chesterfield. The Public Assistance team then spent the next three weeks reviewing projects with the officials who had attended the meetings. The team, devoted to giving every case a fair and thorough examination, spent two more weeks wrapping up the reviews.

► **Region III RD speaks at Red Cross Awards**

Acting Regional Director Patricia G. Arcuri stressed partnership in preparing citizens for the unexpected when she gave the keynote address at the Annual Awards Dinner of the Red Cross of the Delmarva Peninsula April 29 in Wilmington, Del. "There is no doubt that the Red Cross is a valued partner in our efforts to better secure America," she said, citing the nonprofit organization's efforts supporting the Department of Homeland Security's *Ready* campaign.

► **Pennsylvania holds biennial RODEO**

Pennsylvania held its biennial Radiological Officers Development and Emergency Operations (RODEO) in May at Ft. Indiantown Gap. Region III Response and Recovery and National Preparedness staff members participated in three exercise scenarios along with 138 other federal and state officials, as well as first and secondary responders.

► **Pa. community receives PDM-C grant**

Abington Township, Pa., will remove 26 properties from the floodway as part of a \$4 million project approved for a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Competitive (PDM-C) Grant. Federal funding is 75 percent – or \$3 million – with the township providing the balance. The homes on Baeder and Wanamaker Roads are approximately 70 to 80 feet from the stream bank of Baeder Creek. Since 1967, eight major floods have hit Abington Township. Four of the flooding events, including Hurricane Floyd in September 1999 and Tropical Storm Allison in June 2001, triggered Presidential disaster declarations.

► **Hurricane Isabel debris removal continues**

FEMA approved the disbursement of more than \$4.3 million in May to the Commonwealth of Virginia for the collection, reduction, storage and final disposal of massive amounts of vegetative debris in the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel. More than \$2.4 million went to Henrico County, with nearly \$1.9 million earmarked for work conducted by the Virginia Department of Transportation in James City County. To date, FEMA has obligated more than \$130 million in Public Assistance funds for Hurricane Isabel debris removal in Virginia.

► **Pa. and W. Va. perform REP exercise**

West Virginia joined Pennsylvania for the Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) exercise around the Beaver Valley Power Station on May 11 in Shippingport, Pa. The exercise is held every other year to evaluate emergency response capabilities within the 10-mile emergency-planning zone of the nuclear facility.

► **VDEM visits Region III**

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) Recovery and Mitigation Division Director, Harry Colestock, visited the Region III office on April 27. He met with Mitigation Division Director Gene Gruber to discuss mutual objectives and how to work together to better achieve those goals. Harry also introduced Virginia's new Hazard Mitigation Officer, Debra Mills, who subsequently visited with the Region III Mitigation staff on May 5-6.

Frank DeGregory retires after 17 years with Region III



Administrative Services Branch Chief Frank DeGregory (center) poses with co-workers at his May 26 retirement party.

Frank DeGregory has been an Administrative Services Branch Chief in the Region III Administration and Resource Planning Division, an Army Reserve lieutenant colonel doing United Nations liaison work in Bosnia and a soccer and Little League coach. Effective May 26, the Region III veteran adds a new title to his resume: retired.

After 17 years with FEMA and 27 years with the U.S. Army, he intends to spend more time pursuing his hobbies of reading and jogging.

Frank came to FEMA in 1987 as a program officer for the public assistance program in the Disaster Assistance Programs Division. His FEMA career included assignments in the Emergency Management and National Preparedness Programs Division and the Administration and Resource Planning (ARP) Division. In September 1997, he assumed his current position of Administrative Services Branch Chief in the ARP Division.

Among Frank's awards and commendations are the National Director Letter for Exceeding Program Standards, numerous certificates and cash awards for superior performance, the Emeritus Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal and the NATO Medal.

Region III appreciates his dedication and hard work, and wishes him the very best of luck in his retirement.

On the move...



Suzi Cowie has accepted the Disaster Response & Operations Specialist CORE position in Individual Assistance. She began her tour of duty on May 3.



William Blair has accepted the Disaster Response & Operations Specialist CORE position in Public Assistance. His tour of duty began May 16.

RISC Meeting (continued from page 1)

If predictions for this hurricane season come true, the region's initiatives will be instrumental in meeting critical needs. According to John Guiney, Chief of the Eastern Region's Meteorological Services Division of the National Weather Service, this year will be an active hurricane season. Guiney said forecasts are calling for eight hurricanes—two more than the average—three of which will be intense.

The next RISC meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 16 and 17. An earlier session may be held this summer to discuss the progress of the DART system and other initiatives.

Breakfast at FEMA



Local 304 President Dug Salley (l) fries some sunny-side-ups while National Preparedness Division Director Robert Welch demonstrates his pancake-flipping expertise during the Annual Pancake Breakfast, sponsored by the Local 304 and Region III senior management.